

DIVERSION AT CHATEAU POURTALET

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About midnight someone knocked insistently on the door. Jose turned the key. A man he did not know of about 35 was standing on the threshold; he was dressed in a brand new grey suit, with a precise part in his short slick hair.

"Jose Fausto Bulois, if I am not mistaken?" asked the stranger.

"Yes, that is me."

"My name is Smith. Jerry Smith. I am from the United States Embassy."

Jose looked at his guest with evident surprise. A Yankee diplomat in his little room? It didn't make sense! There must have been some misunderstanding.

That time the stranger sat down on the only stool and pulled out a package of cigarettes. He offered them:

"Have a smoke!"

"Thank you, sir. But tobacco for the moment is too expensive a pleasure for me."

"You are right, my friend," Mr. Smith said, looking around at the furnishings of the room, which was something less than humble. "One can only permit himself weaknesses when he is standing solidly on his feet or when he has a rich uncle who will pay for everything."